

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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R 060708Z MAR 78
FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9274
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
CINCPAC
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 2893

EO 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PDIP, PEPR, CB, CH, FR, LA, UR
SUBJECT: OBSERVATIONS ON VIETNAM FOREIGN AFFAIRS

1. FRENCH AMBASSADOR TO VIETNAM CHARLES MALO, WHO WAS HERE
LAST WEEK ON VACATION, COMMENTED AS FOLLOWS ON HANOI'S RELATIONS
WITH CAMBODIA, CHINA AND THE USSR. HIS REMARKS WERE MADE AT A
SMALL GATHERING OF FRNECH, BRITISH, U.S., SPANISH AND THAI
OFFICIALS HOSTED BY THE FRENCH CONSUL GENERAL.

2. THE VIETNAMESE SAY IN PRIVATE THAT CHINA BASICALLY IS TO
BLAME FOR THE SRV-CAMBODIAN CONFLICT BECAUSE CHINA HAS BEEN
THE PATRON OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PHNOM PENH. CHINA IS CAMBODIA'S
FRIEND, SAY THE VEITNAMESE, BUT THEY ADD "WE HAVE A FRIEND
TOO," IMPLYING THAT THE CHINESE WILL NOT JOIN IN THE FIGHTING
BECAUSE THEN THE RUSSIANS WOULD TOO. THE CHINESE IN HANOI
PRIVATELY POINT OUT THAT MADAME TENG YING-CHAO DURING HER
VISIT TO PHNOM PENH QUOTED MAO'S STATEMENT THAT A SMALL
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COUNTRY CAN DEFEAT A LARGE ONE IF ITS CAUSE IS JUST. THEY
ADD, "WE THINK CAMBODIA'S CAUSE IS JUST."

3. THERE IS NO SIGN THE VIETNAMESE ARE GETTING READY TO
PERMIT THE SOVIET UNION AND CHINA TO OPEN CONSULATES IN
SAIGON. HOWEVER, THEY APPARENTLY ARE QUITE WILLING TO ALLOW
THE FRENCH CONSULATE THERE TO CONTINUE FUNCTIONING WITH A

NOT QUITE OFFICIAL STATUS (THERE IS NO FORMAL AGREEMENT AND VIETNAMESE DO NOT ISSUE EXEQUATORS). REAL OBJECT OF THE VIETNAMESE IS TO KEEP THE CHINESE OUT OF SAIGON; THE RUSSIANS ARE ESTABLISHING THEMSELVES THERE BY OPENING SHIPPING OFFICES AND THE LIKE. THE CHINESE WOULD LIKE TO OPEN CONSULATES IN HAIPHONG AND DANANG ALSO; THE RUSSIANS ARE LEKELY TO HAVE A CONSIDERABLE UNOFFICIAL PRESENCE IN DANANG IN CONNECTION WITH DEVELOPING THE PORT AS THE "MOUTH" TO LAOS.

4. CONSTRUCTION WILL BEGIN IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS ON A RUSSIAN-AIDED DAM ON THE BLACK RIVER. FOR THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS, THIS PROJECT IS LIKELY TO TIE UP ABOUT ALL THE MANPOWER THE VIETNAMESE HAVE IN THE NORTH (SIC).

5. THERE ARE REPORTEDLY 120,00-130,000 CAMBODIAN REFUGEES IN VIETNAM, BUT THE VIETNAMESE HAVE STOPPED PERMITTING CAMBODIANS TO DEPART FOR THIRD COUNTRIES, CAUSING SPECULATION THAT THE VIETNAMESE ARE SAVING THESE PEOPLE FOR POPULATING A "LIBERATED AREA" OF CAMBODIA.

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